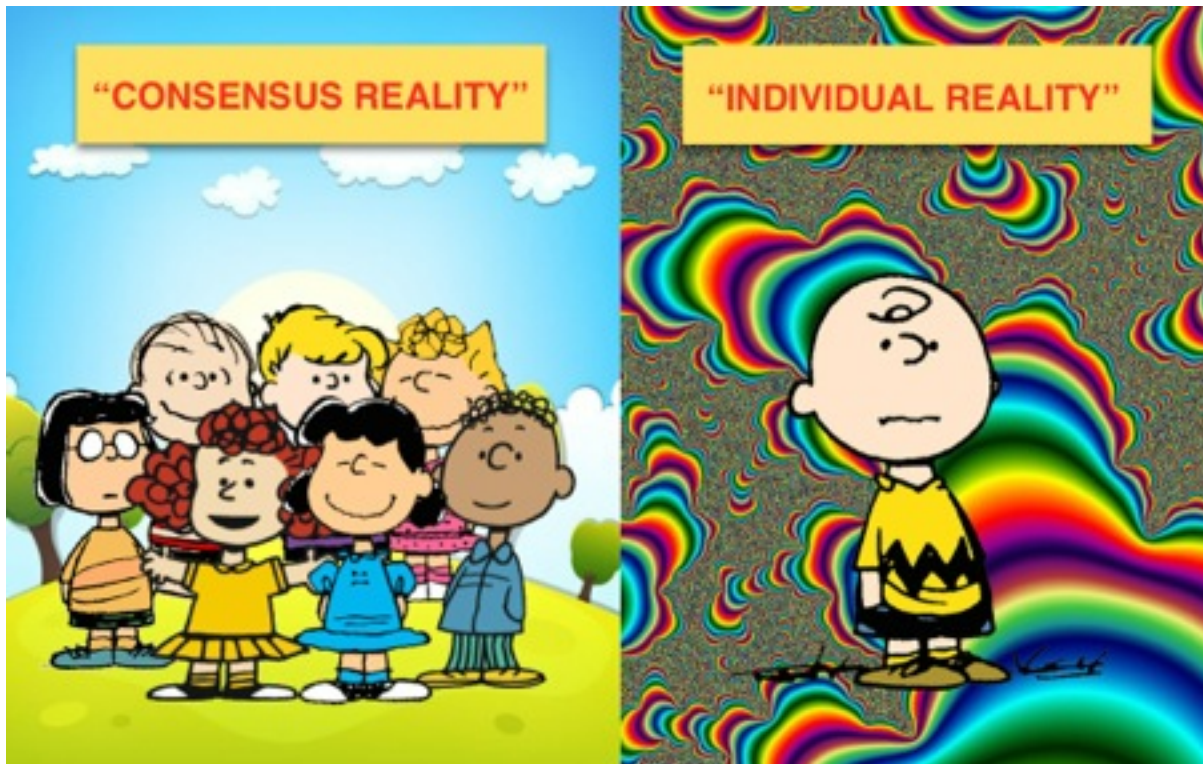

RealityWars

“Consensus Reality” Vs. Individual Reality

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The current controversy regarding NBC’s upcoming interview with Alex Jones brought up a topic that has been on my mind—*belief*. NBC is being slammed for appearing to give legitimacy to Jones—and, via Jones, to Sandy Hook “truther” conspiracies.

Last night I was listening to a podcast with a person whose work I’ve found occasionally thought-provoking in the past—even though his ideas are pretty much on the fringe (you know, unlike *mine*). He declared on this podcast that not only did he now believe Sandy Hook was completely “fake,” but he also suspects most of the key events from the last century were as well—that they were “Hollywood”-type productions using actors

That seems like a pretty big leap to make. How could someone think this way? And what, if anything, is to be “done” about that? That’s what I’d like to discuss here.

Let us start not with history books, but with the individual:



Every person gauges reality using a set of subjective instruments—the senses, the brain, neurons, past memories/schemas, etc. These are *subjective instruments*. Every person's interpretation of reality is going to be, even in a somewhat homogenous-thinking society, a little bit different than everyone else's.

In many past societies, a sort of “consensus reality” was agreed-upon by the tribe to make sure everyone was more or less on the same page. If you deviated from that consensus reality, you might be ostracized or even killed. These draconian measures were put in place, in part, because deep down the Powers That Be understood that a “true” reality was probably a *lot* more subjective than the objective stuff they were pushing.

(in some of these societies there *were* allowed shaman-types to navigate any possible perturbations within the consensus reality, and to deal with the individual reality dilemmas of certain individuals in a more or less humane way. We do not have *nearly* enough of these shaman-types in our present society, and whoa-boy we really really need them now!)

But thanks to champions of individual rights—champions of the concept that the individual's Will (read: subjective reality) is the most important thing—we have, over the last hundred years especially, enjoyed a multiplicity of different realities. Which leads us to the present day, where a gentleman can profess the belief—on a public forum, yet—that many of the important events during recent American history were probably illusions acted out by paid performers.

Now, it would be very “nice” if the vision of a Will-driven utopia—a “Free To Be You And Me” type of utopia—could be realized where only the opinions that you agree with (that you deem rational and backed up by data and interpretations of data that you feel are objective) were allowed to exist.

That would be very nice, but that is not what you signed up for.

For we go back to the individual, whose experience of reality can only be, in the end, subjective (as is all of ours):



And this individual is convinced that Sandy Hook was a “hoax.” That is their conception of reality, based on everything their senses, their brain, their neurons, their past memories/ schemas, and so on have interpreted.

Now if this person hooks up with other people who believe the same thing, this belief, in a sense, becomes even *stronger*. In terms of esoteric thought (which might not square away with your subjective view of reality), these beliefs might even have a stronger “reality” now because they are shared.

And this idea of shared belief being made “realer” might scare the absolute *fuck* out of you—and make you say: “we need to get the consensus, baseline reality back, fucking pronto right now!”

Now, we *can* do that—we (the tribe, the peer group, the nation, the society) can bring back a consensus reality that is enforceable through a number of means (probably more humane than killing, but possibly involving censorship, jail time, enforced meds, and etc.).

In fact, I think some variation of this is actually going to happen (or at least will be attempted) in the future, as a “pendulum” reaction to the current situation in the United States.

But once we do that—once we install the “consensus” reality, the One True Reality, the reality that we claim to have proof is the objective reality—we are no longer championing the Romantic idea of following the individual Will.

Now, we may fool ourselves into believing that we are still these madcap whimsical Progressives—we may build an “acceptable” parameter of alternate interpretations of reality into our Consensus Reality, and then claim anything outside of that is just “evil and sick,” plain and simple. But we are still elevating a subjective reality as *the* Reality.

Please do not consider all I have written as an “endorsement” of Sandy Hook trutherism. While I write on a number of conspiracy topics, I tend not to be a literalist regarding most of them; rather, I see many as metaphysical/metaphorical “symptoms” and “artifacts” of something that I’m not even sure we as humans are able to define yet. (that’s just my subjective opinion, based on my senses, my brain, neurons, memories, schemas, and so on)

But as I hear these louder and louder calls for censorship and censure coming from otherwise Progressive, “free-thinking” circles...I am not sure what they really want to do, here. I “get” that certain rhetoric can occasionally stir up hatred violence, and that we need to be mindful of that. Believe me, I’ve been on the crappy end of that equation, and I *get* it.

However—the moment we “install” a subjective Consensus Reality as *the* reality, and become “Reality Police”...fuck, maybe it is necessary at some point, but then we have to admit that the entire “do what thou wilt” free-wheeling liberal experiment was sort of a “failure.” Then we have to admit that we were not the sort of “hip folks” we thought we were, the Firebrands, the “cool cats,” the rebels, and so on.

Then we might have to admit that in some sense, the mentality of the tribe with their dogmatic Consensus Reality had a “purpose” to it.

Which brings us, paradoxically, to the very same conclusion many of the conspiracy theorists (some tending to be more on the Right of the ideological spectrum) have.

The only other way out of this, it seems to me, is to master a sort of “playful,” plastic, paradoxical attitude towards the idea of multiple and shifting realities (plus a dollop of strong personal ethics). But will a society en masse ever do this?

Or will it just be a handful of enterprising, reality-tripping individuals? As perhaps...it has *always* been.



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